

Why My Cat is A Better Housekeeper than My Wife



After the hardest wash day Minnie will cut out paper men and women for her kitten's amusement.

Minnie is what you might term "a self-made" housekeeper. She never had the science course.

She never swaps gossip with neighbors while working in her lawn. Minnie differs from most women in this.

I asked her if she could make French pastry. My cat colored a trifle as if guilty of great incompetence, and said "no."

During the open season Minnie's table frequently boasts rare bird dishes.

Last night, being Friday night, Minnie served a fine trout. She is a second Isaac Walton!

By T. HOWARD KELLY.

MY cat Minnie and I are very confidential on all subjects. It is against Minnie's frank advice that I write this story concerning her unexcelled housekeeping qualifications in comparison with those of my better half.

As Minnie herself put it, "Suppose your wife should happen to read it—then what? I don't care to be praised at your expense." That's Minnie all over. A cat with a fine sense of sportsmanship. What we call a "regular fellow" in every way. She would give you the shirt off her back if you asked for it. Do you wonder now why I am willing to take the chances involved and give her the credit due her?

Of course Minnie is what you might term "a self-made" housekeeper. She never has had the advantages of a domestic science course or practical housekeeping training.

"Instinct and observation were the only two things in my favor when I started. I was not schooled in the modern theories of cooking. For instance, the calorie system was a mystery to me for many days as to up to date methods—I knew very little about the vacuum cleaner. In fact, its hum and buzz rather frightened me for a long time. Even to-day I prefer to use the old fashioned duster and carpet sweeper," said Minnie one day.

I had also asked her if she knew how to make cream puffs. These things were on my mind. You see I just finished a lunch of six cream puffs which were the sum total result of a morning spent in the kitchen by friend wife. Upon gazing at the domestic science school diploma which she had brought out for the occasion, I decided to find out if my wife had discovered her peculiar way of making cream puffs at the school.

"Certainly," answered my wife. "They are made after the fashion of the cream puffs served by le grand chef patissiere, who was baker to the King of France in 1213."

Of course that was the color of another horse. That made a difference! So, it was after discovering this that I approached Minnie unbeknown to my wife and asked if she knew the cream puff trick. I regretted the question the moment I asked it, because I could see it embarrassed my cat very, very much. She

colored a trifle, as if suddenly guilty of great incompetence.

"I'm very sorry," she said at last. "I am no good at fancy pastry making. That does require technique. Plain, wholesome oven products like bread, rolls and biscuits are my baking limit."

I hastened to assure Minnie it did not lessen my high opinion of her because she could not make cream puffs. If the truth be told, I was thinking at the time that, in memory of my wife's cream puffs, Minnie stood higher than ever with no such pastry record to her credit.

In rendering to Minnie the praise that is due her I have no deliberate intention of knocking my wife's ability as a housekeeper. She is introduced merely as a comparison and without any hard feelings whatsoever. However, I am willing to wager a modest sum that no amount of argument or reasoning on my part could convince her I am not trying to get back at her for the hard boiled eggs and burned toast she served at breakfast this morning.

But, regardless, here goes about Minnie: To begin with, she has a home of her own. Not a pretentious affair, to be sure. Still, it is large enough to house her five children in comfort, if not regal splendor. And there is a homey atmosphere about Minnie's place that I have often found lacking in many of man's palaces.

I pass Minnie's house several times a day and I have yet to find her going about her household tasks with a frown or a grumble. She is always singing at her work, no matter whether it be giving the kittens their Saturday bath, or sweeping down the front porch. If my cat had no other good trait except that one I would be proud of her. She always smiles at her labors. No wonder the tiny inmates of her home are so playful and apparently happy.

Minnie is no slouch at her work. I mean she always appears neat and clean regardless of whether she is sewing or dusting. Take her in the second pose. Do you notice how well groomed she is for a housecleaning job? My cat is all outfitted in an attractive bungalow apron and her hair is protected by a serviceable hat.

I have often watched her at work from a window of our dining room. Believe me, she is thorough. No tapping lightly here and there with a duster. Minnie drags

out the floor coverings and beats out the dust, then sweeps them as clean as a whistle. Once or twice, very casual like, I have called my wife from her magazine to watch Minnie at work. Funny, how our little tricks fall to get over sometimes! Friend wife would just glance airily at Minnie's industry, elevate her brows and then ask me, "Is that all you dragged me away from an absorbing story to see?"

In front of Minnie's place there is a tiny lawn of sodded grass which I had planted so her kittens could gambol outdoors in fair weather. It is simply astounding to see the care my cat lavishes on that tiny green square. Not a morning in spring or summer passes but that she is out, rake in hand, combing it clean of papers, rocks and weeds. Sometimes she lets one of the kittens help her rake. Minnie means to bring her kiddies out the right way, believe me.

Have you ever noticed women at work in their gardens? If so, I am sure that you will agree that most of their time is spent in gossiping across the hedge with their neighbors, or swapping the time of day with some woman passerby. Here is where Minnie differs from women again. She never says a word to any one while cleaning her lawn or working in the bed of pansies that borders her front porch. To intimate friends she will, of course, wish a pleasant "good morning"—but she never engages in conversation or gossip. Minnie keeps her mind on her work. Not many days ago my wife knelt near a rose bush to cut some weeds and got talking to a neighbor. When she turned back to the rose bush it was lying on the ground. She had snipped it off with the scissors, thinking it was the weed!

With cats and kittens, as well as men and children, the first two necessities of life are food and drink. Now, I have known the time when, upon arriving home from a hard day's work, there was not a crumb of bread in the cupboard. Of course, a bridge party would be responsible for this situation.

We would dash to the cafeteria, and later, upon finding all of the stores closed, wonder where breakfast was coming from.

Now, I often drop by Minnie's house around meal times and never in all of my visits have I ever found food and drink lacking there. Minnie is a resourceful provider. If the grocery or meat man fails to come by during the day Minnie does not have to dash out to a cafeteria or some such eating place with her kittens meowing on account of starved little tummies. She goes scouting for the necessary provender and she never fails to get it.

Three nights ago, I saw her returning with a pound of choice porterhouse steak under her arm. I knew the markets had closed long ago.

"Where did you get it, Minnie?" I asked. She gave me a knowing wink and then answered: "Oh, I found it in a refrigerator down on Williams street." Minnie believes strongly that self-preservation is the first law.

I never question her morals about such matters, for I always believe there is a just cause when Minnie resorts to those ways in order to provide her hungry household with food.

During the open season Minnie's table frequently boasts some rare bird dishes. She is an expert hunter. In fact, this cat or mine goes in for many outdoor sports and makes good in all she tries her hand at. I have never known her to take unfair advantage of a bird. You know the old traditions that describe cats as forever hovering around the bird cages waiting for a chance to feast on the little winged creatures behind the bars? Well, it doesn't hold good where Minnie is concerned. She bags her birds like a regular sportsman, in season, and out where they have their own chance to escape.

Last night, being Friday night, Minnie served her kiddies a fine trout. I saw her bringing it up from the lake around noon

time. She had spent half the morning down there fishing with a brand new rod and reel. Most of the men who angle down at Blue Lake acknowledge her piscatorial ability and speak of her as a second Isaac Walton.

There is yet another thing to say in Minnie's favor as a homemaker. In spite of all the chores and duties she performs daily she is never too tired to amuse her kittens. I have watched her cut out paper dolls and clowns after a strenuous Monday of washing and cleaning and entertain her family with all sorts of fantastical paper men and women on strings. Believe me, when my wife has put in a day of housework she is in no mood to entertain her family, which consists of me only.

I don't like to be harsh, and if it sounds

harsh for me to say this, please consider it unsaid. But when I consider the way Minnie runs her household without the help of a domestic science training such as my wife enjoyed, and then consider the lack of efficiency which characterizes the latter's housekeeping, I am convinced that to Minnie goes the first prize.

Charley, my neighbor, who is familiar with Minnie's housekeeping qualifications, has told me in confidence on several occasions that my cat has got his wife beat two country miles when it comes to housekeeping. So you can see that Minnie is not getting all of this praise from me because she is my cat—or, because my wife burned the toast this morning and hard boiled the eggs.

Believe me, Minnie deserves it!

The Housewife's Problem in Russia

AN English woman who recently made a visit to Soviet Russia was astonished to discover that the housewife of that country is in a sad plight. Her investigation was not along the lines that are generally chosen by the visitor. She made a point of looking into the affairs of the Russian home, and her observation is that every individual and every family has reverted to primitive conditions.

In Petrograd and Moscow families live in flats of great, many storied houses, just as they do in New York. The difference is that they have no modern facilities. They must carry their water up long flights of stairs and must carry refuse and garbage down in pails. They have no running water system and no sewerage system.

However, there is some comfort in the fact that very little water is needed, for there is nothing to wash and nothing to wash with. There is no fuel to heat the water and there is no soap.

For a while there was a limited soap supply, but that is now exhausted, and only a certain favored few are issued any rations by the Soviet. These few are fortunate enough to get somewhat less than half a pound of soap a month. The rest must buy if they are to have it; and a pound of soap costs 30,000 rubles—\$14,000 at the pre-war exchange rate.

The housewife is frequently called upon to ply her needle and thread, but she has no new goods upon which to sew. Her effort in this direction is a continual labor

to keep the ragged garments of all members of her family from falling to pieces. One can imagine what hopeless rags the clothing has become during the four years of Communist power, for there have been almost no new goods produced in Russia, and the little quantity that has come from the factories has been taken by the Red army.

Shoes are not, literally, a housewife's problem; and it is just as well, for a new pair costs 1,000,000 rubles.

The principal problem is that of food. Communism has worked out according to promise in that women are free from kitchen cares; but the reason for it is that there is nothing to cook. Meager rations were issued for four years on the card system, and during that time any effort to buy food at an open market was punishable by death. Now there is not even any ration. Potato skin biscuits are considered a luxury. In the large cities there are very few small children left, for they have died of starvation in great numbers. The death rate vastly exceeds the birth rate.

In spite of all privations mothers still strive and struggle and sacrifice themselves for the lives of their children with the same love as any mothers in America or Britain under happier conditions.

There are fortunate families in Russia living in the greatest plenty. Those who have the favor of the Soviet Government live exceedingly well. But they are mere thousands, while millions are half starved and ragged.

How Biggest Diamond Was Polished

THE wonderful skill and ingenuity of the diamond workers, which involves the utmost delicacy of workmanship, has never better been illustrated than in the polishing of the biggest of all diamonds—the famous Cullinan, presented to the late King Edward VII. by the owners of the Kimberley mines in South Africa. It was necessary to cleave the stone in three pieces so as to remove the two very bad flaws. This cleaving was accomplished first by making an incision in the stone with a diamond cutting saw at the point where it was to be cleaved and following the grain (all diamonds have a grain) to a depth of one-half to three-quarters of an inch.

Before this cleaving operation was undertaken crystal models were made and cleaved to learn, as far as could be known, just what would happen when the same process was applied to the real stone.

When the incision had been made the cleaver inserted into the slit a specially constructed knife blade made of the finest steel, and then with a thick steel rod struck it a hard blow and cut the stone in twain exactly at the point where it was proposed it should be cut. It was an exceedingly well executed piece of work.

The cleaving of a diamond is not always accomplished along the line it is intended, and it not infrequently happens that in cleaving a stone it flies into a great number of pieces.

The Cullinan stone having been successfully split the next and final operation was the polishing, the most difficult and nicest

part of the diamond cutting. This huge gem was polished on a disk made of cast iron and steel, revolving at the rate of twenty-four hundred revolutions a minute. The diamond was pressed down on this disk, which was liberally supplied with a mixture of diamond dust and oil, by weights of from fifteen to twenty-five pounds, and the disk was constantly turned from 7 A. M. to 9 P. M. every day for eleven months before the polishing was completed.

The Cullinan is many times larger than the Excelsior, the next largest diamond in the world. The Cullinan in the rough weighed 3,027 carats. The part of the stone on the mill, when finished, weighed between 500 and 600 carats. The actual commercial value of the stone is about \$2,500,000, but its unique character makes it practically priceless.

When the Cullinan was found it was a problem of the diamond company to decide what to do with it. Its mere size, over one and a half pounds, made it unmarketable and unsalable, and to cut it up into small pieces would destroy not only its intrinsic value but its sentimental value. The diamond therefore remained in the vaults of the company for nearly three years, when it was decided to present it to the King of Great Britain on the anniversary of his sixty-sixth birthday.

In the rough the stone was valued at about \$1,000,000, and about this price was actually paid, namely \$400,000 and \$500,000, representing 60 per cent. of the interest the Government of the Transvaal had therein on account of the fact that the Government was entitled to this percentage of the output of all diamond mines of South Africa.

"Why I Had to Become an Actress"—Mrs. "Pat" Campbell

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up a flight of stone steps and was shown into his office. He stood up to shake hands with me. I opened my mouth to speak, and I burst into a flood of tears. I suppose I was tired and hungry, and my stout heart and stiff upper lip went to pieces at the sight of the drowned kittens; I am not sure that even now I could pass the sight unmoved! I told him what I had seen. Mr. Bally very sympathetically took me into an inner room and rang the bell for his housekeeper, and ordered her to bring me some tea. About a quarter of an hour afterward Mr. Bally came back, and I remember with what a gentle smile and manner he told me there was a man, Mr. Green by name, in the next room, who was taking out a play, "Bachelors," by Mr. Hermann Vezin, and that he wanted a leading lady, but he could only pay \$2 10s. a week, and the actress was to supply her own dresses.

I thought it a dazzling offer. I saw Mr. Green, and he seemed to me a wonderful person, for he engaged me at once. I went home to my mother with my good news. My friends gave me some materials, and I sat up at night making my frocks.

The following letter shows the terms of my agreement for this play:

"Frank Green's Company,
"October 16th, 1888.

"Dear Madam

"I hereby engage you for my tour of 'Bachelors' to commence at the Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool, on October 22nd, 1888, at a salary of £2 10s. per week. Fares paid to join and while on tour. You to give one week previous to opening for rehearsals. This engagement

subject to a fortnight's notice on either side and to the usual playhouse rules and regulations.

"FRANK GREEN.

"To Miss Stella Campbell."
I was out to fight for my two children and to try and make enough money to bring Pat home to us more quickly.

My next engagement was on tour in "Tares" with Mrs. Bandmann-Palmer. I think my contract for this play must hold much interest for the young actresses of to-day.

"I hereby undertake to engage you for my forthcoming spring tour, commencing on April 22nd, 1889, at a weekly salary of £2 (two pounds) for seven performances (if required) in each week, you undertaking to play the part of Rachel Denison in 'Tares' and to undertake and act all other parts for which you may be cast during the said tour; you to find your own dresses, you to attend rehearsals in London for two clear weeks previous to commencement of tour; and to pay your own rail fare to the opening town, and to be there in time for rehearsal on the morning of Monday, April 22nd. I to pay your third class railway fares on each journey taken with the company after joining.

"This engagement is to be terminable by a fortnight's notice on either side, and you are to abide by the rules and regulations of the various theaters in which the company may be acting. (Signed) 'Millicent Bandmann-Palmer. April 15th, 1889.'"

How was it done? How did we live? And how manage to send money home? We did, and some of us are alive to tell the tale.

Archeologist's Pick Soon to Invade Caesar's Camps

THE archeologist's pick is continually making its way into the past and bringing to light the works and ways of the ancients. Among the most interesting points of attack just before the war was Alesia, the Gallic stronghold where Vercingetorix made his last stand against Julius Caesar. The work, arduous and extensive, was undertaken by a French historical association and was interrupted by the war. It is hoped, however, to resume this work in due course.

For many centuries the site of Alesia was uncertain. All questions in regard to its locality, however, were set at rest by Napoleon III., who made excavations in a plain just beneath the plateau of Mont-Auxois, not far from Dijon. Relying on an old monkish narrative and the Commentaries of Caesar, Napoleon searched for traces of Caesar's siege works and found them just where the records said they were and in just the form described. He also found the places where Caesar had stabled his horses, close to the river. Even in their smallest detail the remains tallied so exactly with the record that there could be no doubt as to the situation of Alesia.

Though Napoleon III. unearthed Caesar's camp in the plain, he left the top of Mont-Auxois untouched, and it is there the Semur Archeological Society began its work. To-day the entire plateau is covered with cornfields and potato patches. Be-

neath, to be revealed, one may picture a Gallo-Roman oppidum, with its temples, its theaters, its baths, its palaces, its amphitheater and its forum.

There are evidences to prove that the dream of the archeologist is founded on fact. Heaps of coins, gold, silver and copper, have been accidentally unearthed on top of Mont-Auxois. Jewels, weapons, bronzes, significant inscriptions—one in pure Latin, dating from the first century—have been discovered.

One September a congress of archeologists and historians assembled at Alesia. To impress them with the importance of the forthcoming excavations the superintendent of Napoleon's operations had several trenches dug, absolutely at random, in the cornfields. One of these trenches laid bare the porch of a Roman theater. A shallow ditch, nowhere more than a yard deep, was made clear across the plateau. This brought to light walls, wells, pavements, to say nothing of medallions, pottery and fragments of statuary.

It is not merely to recover lost vestiges of Roman Gaul that Mont-Auxois will eventually be explored. The French archeologists look for remains of a pre-Roman Alesia. A legend makes Hercules the founder of the ancient city. Students connect it with Phoenician settlers one thousand years before the Christian era. Older still, the name is traced to an Iberian source.